



The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Recognition Award

On September 29, 2011, the U.S. Secretary of Education opened the pilot year of the Green Ribbon Schools award to recognize the highest performing green schools in the nation. The recognition award recognizes exemplary achievement in environmental impact, health and education. The standards and resources that the award relates advance the complementary aims of cutting schools' costs, saving jobs; fostering health, wellness and productivity; providing a well-rounded education, increasing STEM skills, and ensuring students' college and career preparedness.

The recognition award is the first comprehensive federal policy addressing the environmental impact, health and education of our schools. It lays out a thoughtful vision for schools, sets a high bar for success, and will raise the profile of individual green schools and the states that encourage them.

Green schools are critical to schools' fiscal health and our nation's economy. Much needed improvements to school facilities save schools money. They prepare students to be good citizens and to participate in the green economy, while strengthening the nation's energy security and conserving precious natural resources.

Healthy behaviors, environmental education and green facilities are as vital to individual students as they are to the nation. High standards of nutrition, fitness and facility conditions improve student and staff health, attendance and productivity, and enhance achievement and engagement, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Green Ribbon has prompted unprecedented government efficiency. State education agencies are, for the first time, collaborating with health, natural resources, energy and environment agencies, as well as national and local non-governmental organizations to bring more resources to support schools in spite of tough economic times.

As with the Blue Ribbon Schools recognition award, schools do not apply to the Department of Education but to state education agencies. Schools should contact state departments of education for information on nomination selection, remembering that the award is voluntary and that not all state education agencies will nominate schools.

Winners of the Green Ribbon, like Blue Ribbon Schools, may experience national and local press coverage, re-energized staff and parents, enhanced community support, increased application rates, and new private financial assistance. Winners will be invited to participate in national and local recognition ceremonies.

Blog: <http://www.ed.gov/blog/tag/green-ribbon-schools/>

Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EDGreenRibbonSchools>